

RETAIL PRICES - JUNE QUARTER, 1950.

All Items - "C" Series.

Index numbers of retail prices of all items ("C" Series) - with the weighted average of the six capital cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1000 - for the June quarter, 1950, with figures for March quarter, 1950, for comparison (in brackets), were:- Brisbane, 1446 (1414); Toowoomba, 1455 (1429); Rockhampton, 1461 (1428); Townsville, 1506 (1469); Bundaberg, 1437 (1401); and Warwick, 1432 (1406).

The rise in retail prices in the June quarter of 1950 (as measured by the "C" Series index number) was greater than in the March quarter in all six cities. Upward movement of prices in the June quarter is, however, largely due to the seasonal effect of the arrival of new season's winter clothing at higher prices, but, in spite of this, the increase in the index number in all cities was less in this quarter of 1950 than in the corresponding quarters of 1948 and 1949. The increase in the index number over the twelve months period ended June, 1950, was 8.1 per cent., compared with 9.2 per cent. during the twelve months ended March, 1950, and the maximum rise over a twelve months period of 11.0 per cent. during the year ended December, 1948.

While clothing and footwear prices increased in Brisbane by 4.7 per cent. during the recent quarter, the rise in food and grocery prices was only 1.4 per cent., compared with a rise of 2.6 per cent. for the previous quarter. Apart from June quarter of 1947 and September quarter of 1949 (when food and grocery prices remained practically unchanged), this was the smallest quarterly rise in this section of the index since the latter part of 1946. The rise of 0.9 per cent. in the miscellaneous items section of the index was the same as in the previous quarter, and was lower than the average rate of increase during the past two years.

At the end of the war in 1945, Brisbane food prices were 13.2 per cent. and clothing prices 72.1 per cent. above pre-war level. Since then prices of commodities in both these sections of the index have risen by approximately another 50 per cent., the food index being now 46.7 per cent. and the clothing index 54.0 per cent. above the June quarter of 1945, making them respectively 66.1 and 165.0 per cent. above the 1938-39 level.

The indexes show the following percentage increases when compared with those for the periods shown.

Retail Price Index, "C" Series, Percentage Increases, June Quarter, 1950.

| City.       |    |    | From Year Ended<br>June, 1939. | From June<br>Quarter, 1949. | From March<br>Quarter, 1950. |
|-------------|----|----|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
|             |    |    | %                              | %                           | %                            |
| Brisbane    | .. | .. | 67.6                           | 8.1                         | 2.3                          |
| Toowoomba   | .. | .. | 71.0                           | 7.9                         | 1.8                          |
| Rockhampton | .. | .. | 69.7                           | 8.3                         | 2.3                          |
| Townsville  | .. | .. | 65.1                           | 7.8                         | 2.5                          |
| Bundaberg   | .. | .. | 70.9                           | 8.3                         | 2.6                          |
| Warwick     | .. | .. | 74.2                           | 6.9                         | 1.8                          |

Food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and the miscellaneous group of items comprising household drapery and hardware, fuel, light, fares, etc., have shown the following percentage changes during the last quarter and since 1938-39.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increases, June Quarter, 1950.

| City.       | Food and Groceries.               |                                 | Clothing and Footwear.            |                                 | Miscellaneous Items.              |                                 |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|             | From Year<br>Ended June,<br>1939. | From March<br>Quarter,<br>1950. | From Year<br>Ended June,<br>1939. | From March<br>Quarter,<br>1950. | From Year<br>Ended June,<br>1939. | From March<br>Quarter,<br>1950. |
|             | %                                 | %                               | %                                 | %                               | %                                 | %                               |
| Brisbane    | 66.1                              | 1.4                             | 165.0                             | 4.7                             | 40.9                              | 0.9                             |
| Toowoomba   | 77.0                              | 1.6                             | 164.8                             | 3.7                             | 35.4                              | 0.3                             |
| Rockhampton | 63.4                              | 1.2                             | 163.3                             | 4.8                             | 44.0                              | 1.8                             |
| Townsville  | 60.9                              | 2.5                             | 164.4                             | 4.6                             | 43.1                              | 0.7                             |
| Bundaberg   | 62.1                              | 1.8                             | 166.9                             | 5.2                             | 40.5                              | 0.8                             |
| Warwick     | 70.7                              | 1.5                             | 163.6                             | 3.9                             | 39.1                              | 0.1                             |

Food and Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses).

As shown in the previous table, food prices increased, during the quarter, in the six cities by amounts ranging from 1.2 per cent. in Rockhampton to 2.5 per cent. in Townsville. The increases were due mainly to rises in the prices of meat, eggs, and dried and canned fruit. Meat prices were raised in March, and thus the increase, which was only partly felt in the March quarter averages, became fully effective in the June quarter index.

The rent index increased in Brisbane (0.6 per cent.) but remained stationary in the other five cities.

Clothing, Footwear, and Miscellaneous Items.

During the quarter the clothing and footwear index increased by amounts ranging from 3.7 per cent. in Toowoomba to 5.2 per cent. in Bundaberg. Principal clothing increases were in overcoats, pullovers and cardigans, men's and boys' suits, and women's costumes. There was also a general increase in footwear prices.

Increases in the miscellaneous items index were due to higher charges for gas in Brisbane and Rockhampton, and rises in the prices of household drapery and utensils in Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Townsville, and Bundaberg.

Comparison of Costs in Queensland Cities.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required in June quarter, 1950, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

| City.         | All Items. |    |     | Food and Groceries. |    |    | Rent (4 and 5 Rooms). |    |    | Clothing and Footwear. |    |     | Miscellaneous Items. |    |     |
|---------------|------------|----|-----|---------------------|----|----|-----------------------|----|----|------------------------|----|-----|----------------------|----|-----|
|               | £          | s. | d.  | £                   | s. | d. | £                     | s. | d. | £                      | s. | d.  | £                    | s. | d.  |
| Brisbane ..   | 1          | 0  | 0   | 1                   | 0  | 0  | 1                     | 0  | 0  | 1                      | 0  | 0   | 1                    | 0  | 0   |
| Toowoomba ..  | 1          | 0  | 1½  | 1                   | 0  | 3¼ | 1                     | 0  | 5½ |                        | 19 | 11¾ |                      | 19 | 10½ |
| Rockhampton.. | 1          | 0  | 2½  | 1                   | 0  | 6¾ |                       | 18 | 7  | 1                      | 0  | 3   | 1                    | 0  | 9¼  |
| Townsville .. | 1          | 0  | 10  | 1                   | 1  | 7½ |                       | 19 | 9¼ | 1                      | 0  | 2½  | 1                    | 1  | 3½  |
| Bundaberg ..  |            | 19 | 10½ | 1                   | 0  | 7  |                       | 15 | 9¼ | 1                      | 0  | 4½  | 1                    | 0  | 9¼  |
| Warwick ..    |            | 19 | 9¾  | 1                   | 0  | 3¾ |                       | 17 | 4½ |                        | 19 | 9½  | 1                    | 0  | 9¾  |

During the quarter, the cost of all items together increased, in relation to Brisbane, in Townsville and Bundaberg, but decreased in Toowoomba and Warwick. Prices were highest in Townsville, where goods costing £1 in Brisbane would have cost £1 0s. 10d., and cheapest in Warwick, where the same quantity of goods could have been purchased for 19s. 9¾d. Townsville's high level is chiefly due to dearer food, while the low positions of Warwick and Bundaberg are due mainly to low house rents, as food and groceries and miscellaneous items are dearer than in Brisbane in both cities, and in Bundaberg clothing prices are higher than in Brisbane though in Warwick they are a little lower.

Food and grocery prices in the five provincial cities remained dearer than in Brisbane. In Townsville the excess over Brisbane prices increased by 3d. in the £, but relative food and grocery prices in the other four cities remained much the same as in the previous quarter.

During the recent quarter, costs of clothing and footwear, in relation to Brisbane, showed little variation in Rockhampton and Townsville. In Toowoomba and Warwick, clothing etc. prices rose less than in Brisbane so that both these cities now show a saving over Brisbane in expenditure on these items. In Bundaberg, on the other hand, the higher cost of clothing of 3¼d. in the £ in the previous quarter rose to 4½d. in the £.

In relation to Brisbane, prices of miscellaneous items decreased in all cities except Rockhampton, where there was an increase of 2d. in the cost of miscellaneous goods which could have been purchased for £1 in Brisbane. Toowoomba was still the only city where prices of these items were cheaper than in Brisbane.



Basic Wage Rates in State Capital Cities.

The following table shows, for the June quarter of 1950, the retail price index number ("C" Series) for each of the six capital cities and the prevailing basic wage rates for males prescribed by Commonwealth and State industrial tribunals. The fourth column shows the amounts which would have been required in Brisbane to provide a standard of living equivalent to that provided by each State basic wage in its own capital city. The differences between these amounts and the State basic wage for Brisbane, which are given in the last column, show the margin of advantage in real purchasing power provided by the Queensland basic wage over each of the other State basic wages, according to price levels and wages prevailing at the middle of May, 1950.

Retail Prices and Basic Wage Rates, June Quarter, 1950.

| Capital City. | Retail Price Index ("C" Series) 2nd Quarter, 1950. | Commonwealth Court Basic Wage for Males at 15. 5. 50. | State Court Basic Wage for Males at 15. 5. 50. | Equivalent at Brisbane Prices of Each State Basic Wage. | Margin of Purchasing Power in Favour of Brisbane State Basic Wage. |
|---------------|--|---|--|---|--|
|               |  | £ s. d.   | £ s. d.  | £ s. d.   | s. d.  |
| Brisbane ..   | 1446   | 6 9 0   | 6 13 0   | 6 13 0  | -  |
| Sydney ..     | 1564   | 6 18 0  | 6 18 0   | 6 7 7   | 5 5  |
| Melbourne ..  | 1542   | 6 17 0  | 6 17 0   | 6 8 6   | 4 6  |
| Adelaide ..   | 1492   | 6 11 0  | 6 11 0   | 6 7 0   | 6 0  |
| Perth ..      | 1517   | 6 13 0  | 7 0 0  | 6 13 5  | -0 5   |
| Hobart ..     | 1501   | 6 11 0  | 6 11 0   | 6 6 2   | 6 10   |

Following the publication of the index numbers shown in the above table, the basic wage of the Commonwealth Court was automatically adjusted from 1st August, 1950. The new rates and the amounts of adjustments are shown below, together with the latest basic wage rates for males and females declared by the various State industrial authorities, and the dates from which they operated.

Basic Wage Rates, September Quarter, 1950.

| Capital City. | Commonwealth Basic Wage. |                               | State Basic Wage. |          |                         |
|---------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------------|
|               | Males. <sup>a</sup>      | Increase on Previous Quarter. | Males.            | Females. | Date of Operation.      |
|               | £ s. d.                  | s. d.                         | £ s. d.           | £ s. d.  |                         |
| Brisbane ..   | 6 12 0                   | 3 0                           | 6 16 0            | 4 5 6    | 31. 7. 50.              |
| Sydney ..     | 7 2 0                    | 4 0                           | 7 2 0             | 3 16 6   | 1. 8. 50.               |
| Melbourne ..  | 7 0 0                    | 3 0                           | (7 0 0)           | a        | (1. 8. 50) <sup>b</sup> |
| Adelaide ..   | 6 14 0                   | 3 0                           | 6 14 0            | 3 13 2   | 1. 8. 50.               |
| Perth ..      | 6 16 0                   | 3 0                           | 7 3 6             | 3 17 6   | 31. 7. 50.              |
| Hobart ..     | 6 15 0                   | 4 0                           | (6 15 0)          | a        | (1. 8. 50) <sup>b</sup> |

<sup>a</sup> Female rates vary from 54 to 75 per cent. of the male rate.

<sup>b</sup> No State wage declared, but rate shown is that of Commonwealth Court which is followed to a large extent.

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BRISBANE.

1st August, 1950.

Table No. 1 - The "All Items" Retail Prices Index - "C" Series.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1000.)

| City.            | Year<br>Ended<br>June,<br>1939. | Year<br>Ended<br>June,<br>1946. | Year<br>Ended<br>June,<br>1950. | Quarter Ended - |                 |                 |                 |                |
|------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
|                  |                                 |                                 |                                 | June,<br>1949.  | Sept.,<br>1949. | Decr.,<br>1949. | March,<br>1950. | June,<br>1950. |
| Brisbane .. ..   | 863                             | 1079                            | 1404                            | 1338            | 1364            | 1393            | 1414            | 1446           |
| Toowoomba.. ..   | 851                             | 1092                            | 1417                            | 1349            | 1377            | 1408            | 1429            | 1455           |
| Rockhampton ..   | 861                             | 1084                            | 1415                            | 1349            | 1373            | 1399            | 1428            | 1461           |
| Townsville .. .  | 912                             | 1119                            | 1459                            | 1397            | 1418            | 1444            | 1469            | 1506           |
| Bundaberg.. ..   | 841                             | 1059                            | 1391                            | 1327            | 1352            | 1374            | 1401            | 1437           |
| Weighted Average |                                 |                                 |                                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                |
| Five Towns .. .  | 864                             | 1082                            | 1409                            | 1343            | 1368            | 1397            | 1419            | 1451           |
| Warwick .. .. .  | 822                             | 1073                            | 1400                            | 1339            | 1371            | 1390            | 1406            | 1432           |

Table No. 2 - Food, Groceries, and Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses) Index - "B" Series.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1000.)

| City.            | Year<br>Ended<br>June,<br>1939. | Year<br>Ended<br>June,<br>1946. | Year<br>Ended<br>June,<br>1950. | Quarter Ended - |                 |                 |                 |                |
|------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
|                  |                                 |                                 |                                 | June,<br>1949.  | Sept.,<br>1949. | Decr.,<br>1949. | March,<br>1950. | June,<br>1950. |
| Brisbane .. ..   | 852                             | 927                             | 1179                            | 1146            | 1147            | 1171            | 1193            | 1206           |
| Toowoomba.. ..   | 821                             | 950                             | 1199                            | 1169            | 1169            | 1188            | 1212            | 1226           |
| Rockhampton ..   | 837                             | 915                             | 1177                            | 1145            | 1143            | 1161            | 1196            | 1206           |
| Townsville .. .  | 916                             | 980                             | 1240                            | 1213            | 1211            | 1228            | 1249            | 1273           |
| Bundaberg .. .   | 799                             | 888                             | 1133                            | 1113            | 1110            | 1117            | 1144            | 1160           |
| Weighted Average |                                 |                                 |                                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                |
| Five Towns .. .  | 851                             | 930                             | 1183                            | 1151            | 1151            | 1173            | 1197            | 1211           |
| Warwick .. .. .  | 768                             | 897                             | 1152                            | 1124            | 1128            | 1141            | 1162            | 1175           |

Table No. 3 - Average Retail Prices of Food and Groceries, Brisbane.

| Commodity and<br>Unit of Quantity.          | Year<br>Ended<br>June,<br>1939. | Month of -      |                | Commodity and<br>Unit of Quantity. | Year<br>Ended<br>June,<br>1939. | Month of -      |                |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
|   |                                 | March,<br>1950. | June,<br>1950. |                                    |                                 | March,<br>1950. | June,<br>1950. |
|   | d.                              | d.              | d.             |                                    | d.                              | d.              | d.             |
| Bread .. 2 lb.                              | 5.33                            | 8.00            | 8.00           | Milk .. 1 qt.                      | 6.00                            | 10.10           | 10.10          |
| Flour .. 2 lb.                              | 3.73                            | 5.36            | 5.36           | Beef -                             |                                 |                 |                |
| Tea .. 1 lb.                                | 26.99                           | 31.41           | 31.64          | Sirloin Roast 1 lb.                | 8.73                            | 19.00           | 19.05          |
| Sugar .. 1 lb.                              | 3.98                            | 4.95            | 4.96           | Steak, Rump 1 lb.                  | 11.34                           | 24.55           | 24.55          |
| Sago .. 1 lb.                               | 3.00                            | 8.85            | 8.55           | Steak, Chuck 1 lb.                 | 5.83                            | 12.55           | 12.55          |
| Jam, Plum 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> lb. | 8.02                            | 16.55           | 16.55          | Rolled Brisket 1 lb.               | 5.48                            | 12.55           | 12.65          |
| Raisins .. 1 lb.                            | 10.57                           | 17.05           | 19.60          | Mutton -                           |                                 |                 |                |
| Potatoes .. 7 lb.                           | 14.88                           | 21.41           | 21.00          | Leg .. 1 lb.                       | 7.75                            | 12.15           | 12.30          |
| Onions .. 1 lb.                             | 2.93                            | 4.56            | 4.50           | Loin Chops 1 lb.                   | 7.78                            | 12.55           | 12.65          |
| Soap .. 1 lb.                               | 6.20                            | 10.49           | 10.52          | Pork -                             |                                 |                 |                |
| Butter .. 1 lb.                             | 19.00                           | 25.91           | 25.91          | Leg .. 1 lb.                       | 11.40                           | 28.11           | 29.56          |
| Cheese .. 1 lb.                             | 13.28                           | 17.55           | 17.77          | Chops .. 1 lb.                     | 11.48                           | 28.61           | 29.72          |
| Eggs .. 1 doz.                              | 19.69                           | 37.00           | 42.00          |                                    |                                 |                 |                |